<table>
<thead>
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<th>S P I K E S</th>
<th>Delivering Serious News</th>
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| **SETTING** | Find a quiet location; private if possible.  
 Invite the important people to be present.  
 Have tissues and enough chairs.  
 Turn off the ringer on your phone/pager. |
| **PERCEPTION** | “Tell me what you understand about your illness.”  
 “What have the other doctors told you about your illness?”  
 Look for knowledge and emotional information as the patient responds |
| **INVITATION** | “Would it be okay for me to discuss the results of your tests with you now?”  
 “How do you prefer to discuss medical information in your family?”  
 “Some people prefer a global picture of what is happening and others like all the details, what do you prefer?” |
| **KNOWLEDGE** | Give a warning... “I have something serious we need to discuss”  
 Avoid medical jargon. Say it simply and stop. (e.g.  “Your cancer has spread to your liver. It is getting worse despite our treatments.”) |
| **EMPATHY** | Wait quietly for the patient.  
 “I know this is not what you expected to hear today.”  
 “This is very difficult news.” |
| **SUMMARY** | “We’ve talked about a lot of things today, can you please tell me what you understand.”  
 “Let’s set up a follow-up appointment.” |

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www.ethics.va.gov/goalsofcaretraining/practitioner.asp